

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above-identified application in view of the present amendment is respectfully requested.

Claims 20-23, 25-29, and 35-37 have been rejected as unpatentable over Hashimoto, JP 09-039801, in view of Koide, US 6,079,736. Claims 24 and 38 have been rejected as unpatentable over Hashimoto in view of Koide and Nishiguchi et al., US 5,925,314. Claims 30-34 and 39, previously withdrawn from consideration, have been canceled without prejudice by this Amendment. Claims 21-29 and 35-38 have been amended to correct minor informalities.

The Examiner's cooperation during a telephone interview between herself and Applicant's representative on June 17, 2004 is greatly appreciated. During that interview, the combination of Hashimoto in view of Koide was discussed and the deficiencies of that combination were pointed out.

Claims 21 and 35 recite producing a one-piece steering wheel skeleton having a steering wheel rim (14) with recesses (22 or 24). The combination of Hashimoto in view of Koide does not disclose these features. Accordingly, claims 21 and 35, as well as claims 22-27 and 36-38 which depend from claims 21 and 35, respectively, are in condition for allowance.

Amended claim 28 recites the step of forming projections (30) on the steering wheel rim (14), the projections (30) extending approximately radially with respect to a cross-section of the steering wheel rim (14) (Specification, page 6, lines 5-18). The combination of Hashimoto in view of Koide

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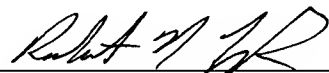
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does not disclose this forming step, since modifying the steering wheel of Hashimoto to be a single piece would eliminate the spoke connection pieces (19). Claim 28, as well as claim 29 which depends from claim 28, are in condition for allowance.

In view of the foregoing, allowance of the above-identified application is respectfully requested.

Please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment in the fees for this amendment to our Deposit Account No. 20-0090.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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